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Concert: Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer

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ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Ford Hall
Wednesday, April 25, 2007
8:15 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

Ge Xu (Antiphony) (1994)

Chen Yi
(b. 1953)

Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima (1960) Krzysztof Penderecki
for 52 Strings (b. 1933)

Piano Conceto No. 3 in C minor, op. 37 Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

I. *Allegro con brio*

Jia Li Yang, piano
Winner of the 2006 High School Piano Competition

INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43 (1902)

Jean Sibelius
(1865-1957)

- I. *Allegretto*
- II. *Tempo andante, ma rubato*
- III. *Vivacissimo*
- IV. *Allegro moderato*

PROGRAM NOTES

Ge Xu (Antiphony)

Commissioned by The Women's Philharmonic, San Francisco, during the composer's residency supported by the Meet The Composer New Residencies program started in 1993. The piece is completed in 1994 and premiered in Jan. 28, 1995, and dedicated to Mr. John Duffy, President Emeritus of Meet The Composer. For celebrating the Chinese lunar New Year or Mid autumn Festival, people of Zhuang minority nationality in Southern China often gather in the field and sing mountain songs in solo, choir or antiphonal forms. In the antiphonal singing, distinct groups or individuals make up the texts in the style of antithetical couplets, as like a competition between the two. The vivid scene has inspired the composer to write music for keeping the high spirit and ideal hope alive. The pitch and rhythmic material in the piece are taken from mountain song and dancing tune of Zhuang, Miao, Yi and Buyi minority nationalities in Southwestern China where I have gone to collect folk music in the early 80th's. (Chen Yi)

Threnody

Threnody was completed in 1960, and remains one of Penderecki's best-known works. Composed at a time when serial technique dominated avant-garde music, Threnody is instead a deeply personal work, disturbing in its evocations of human misery and terror.

Though it is dedicated to the victims of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima at the end of the Second World War, Penderecki drew on his own experiences in Nazi-occupied Poland in composing this work. He noted that Nazi war crimes, especially "the great Apocalypse" of Auschwitz, have been in his "subconscious mind since the war." As a result, this work, like much of Penderecki's music, is emotionally powerful and in large part autobiographical, but at the same time expresses a universal mourning for the victims of war.

Threnody is scored for 52 strings, and features a number of spectacular instrumental effects—most significantly microtonal glissandi. Threnody is also a work of limited or "controlled" aleatoric elements: musical gestures are represented graphically on the score, but the performers are at times allowed some freedom in the realization of musical elements like pitch and duration. The work is divided roughly into three sections, with the outermost sections allowing the greatest freedom for the performers. At certain points in the score, performers may simply play their instruments' highest notes, or, when pitch is specified, performers may move from pitch to pitch by quarter tones. Penderecki also demands unconventional bowing for effect, including bowing between the bridge and the tailpiece, and bowing the bridge or tailpiece. He also calls for striking the soundboard with the fingers. Instruments were divided into groups and assigned a particular range of pitches, within which they move by glissando.

Threnody is very nearly an arrhythmic piece, as there is no regular pulse to be found; instead, individual sections are measured by clock time, in minutes and seconds. The result of Penderecki's controlled aleatoricism is a work of considerable expressive force—a musical representation of human

suffering that, despite its considerable technical difficulties, strikes home with surprising sincerity. Each string section, as it ebbs and swells, engages in a kind of dialogue with other sections, and the effect of many instruments playing glissandi at once simulates, rather distressingly, the sound of human voices wailing in a swirling, hellish polyphony. It is a vivid evocation of the horrors of war. (Alexander Carpenter)

Piano Concerto No. 3

Beethoven composed this work in 1799-1800, and introduced it at Vienna on April 5, 1803. The first sketches go back to 1797 -- after he'd composed the B flat Piano Concerto (published as No. 2), but before composition of the C major Concerto (in 1798, published as No. 1). Although Beethoven played the first performance of No. 3 in 1803 from a short score -- no one was going to steal it from him! -- he'd actually completed the music prior to April 1800, apart from a few last-minute adjustments. In other words, before he wrote the Second Symphony (Op. 36), the Moonlight Piano Sonata (Op. 27/2), or the Op. 31 triptych for keyboard.

The model for this startlingly dramatic concerto was Mozart's C minor (K. 491), which Beethoven played in public concerts. But "model" does not mean he merely imitated; indeed, the orchestra's traditional first exposition is so extensively developed that the soloist's repetition risks sounding anticlimactic. Otherwise, as Charles Rosen has written with formidable insight in *The Classical Style*, "There are many passages in the first movement, *Allegro con brio*, which allude to Mozart's concerto in the same key...particularly the role of the piano after the cadenza. But the striking development section, with [a] new melody half-recitative [and] half-aria, is entirely original, as is the new sense of weight to the form." Beethoven wrote down that cadenza several years later, to preserve the work's character and momentum, when implacable deafness seriously disadvantaged his public appearances at the keyboard. (Roger Dettmer)

Symphony No. 2

The genesis of the Second Symphony can be traced to Sibelius' trip to Italy in early 1901. The trip came about at the suggestion of his friend, the amateur musician Axel Carpelan, and it was there that he began contemplating several ambitious projects, including a four-movement tone poem based on the Don Juan story and a setting of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. While none of these plans ever came to fruition, some of the ideas sketched during this trip did find their way into the second movement of this symphony. Carpelan was also instrumental in raising money to allow Sibelius to relinquish his work at the Helsinki Conservatoire and devote himself to the composition of the Second Symphony. Despite his friend's help, Sibelius' return to Finland for the summer and autumn was not accompanied by any great burst of inspiration, and extensive revisions delayed the first performance, first to January 1902 and then to March 1903. But from then on, the symphony enjoyed unparalleled success in Finland and eventually led to the major breakthrough in Germany that was so craved by Scandinavian composers of this era (one which Nielsen, for instance, never achieved).

The Second Symphony has retained an extraordinary popularity for its individualistic tonal language, dark wind coloring, muted string writing,

simple folk-like themes, and distinctly "national" flavor that are all Sibelian to the core. While the opening mood is pastoral, it leads to an air of instability, in which small, short gestures seem to arise at random and then trail off. Yet there is a subtle coherence to the work that counters its seemingly shapeless quality. All of the material of the first movement emerges from either the two repeated-note subjects heard in the strings and winds at the opening, or from a brooding idea first presented in the winds and brass.

Unlike the first movement, in which the gentleness of the introduction is recaptured at the conclusion, the second movement is full of turbulence and ends without consolation. Two competing subjects seem to engage in a battle: First, a dirge-like bassoon melody in D minor, marked "lugubrious," builds to a towering culmination in winds and brass; then an ethereal, ruminative theme is played by divided strings in the key of F sharp major.

The energetic scherzo, with its machine-gun figures in the strings, is built from a fragment of greatest simplicity: a repeated B flat followed by a turn around that note. Following the precedent of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the Scherzo is linked directly to the finale through a grand rhetorical bridge passage. The symphony at last achieves a flowing D major melodic line that heroically shakes off the D minor preparation, in the best sense of the Romantic tradition. Also like Beethoven, Sibelius brings back the transitional material a second time so that the victory of the major key can be savored anew, after which he concludes the work with a hymn-like peroration.
(Brian Wise)

ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Violin I

Josh Modney,
concertmaster
Andrew Bergevin
Megan Atchley
Brian Hwang
Jeff Abbott
Kate Goldstein
Maevae O'Hara
Brenna Gillette
Tim Ball
Mary Raschella
Ian Salmon
Jeannine McGreevy

Violin II

Chris Jones*
Natasha Colkett
Colin Oettle
Sharon Mohar
Natalie Brandt
Laura Sciavolino
Shawn Riley
Diane Bartholomew
Charlie Palys
Will Downey
Sarina Woo
Charlene Kluegel***

Viola

Lauren Buono*
Nicole Wright
Kathryn Kimble
Frances Rose-Newton
Jessica Owens
Zach Slack
Sara Shepard
Derek Hensler
Bethany Niedbala
Marissa Ledet

Cello

Matt Rotjan*
Peter Guarino
Sam Boase-Miller
Laura Messina
Allison Rehn
Phil Abbott
David MacLeese
Emily McNeill
Eric Perreault
Kelly Quinn

Bass

Xander Lott*
Sara Johnson
Paul Feissner
Naomi Williams
Ben Reynolds
Kyle Olmstead
Casey Georgi
Audrey Miller***

Flute

Leslie Harrison*
Jacquie Christen
Aimee Shorten

Oboe

Noelle Drewes*
Margaret Westreich
Megan Kimball

Clarinet

Julie Pacheco*
Amanda Jenne
Allegra Smith

Bassoon

Andrew Beeks*
Jeff Ward

Horn

Rose Valby*
Meredith Moore**
Chelsey Hamm
Jenna Troiano
Bryn Coveney

Trumpet

Calvin Rice*
Lindsey Jessick
Nick Kunkle

Trombone

Megan Boutin*
Francis Cook
Nick Smarcz

Tuba

Susan Wheatley*

Timpani

Kaye Sevier

Percussion

Matthew Donello*
Lauretta Noller
Evan Peltier

Graduate Assistant

Devin Hughes

* principal

** assistant principal

*** Penderecki